

**MAY**

After holding extensive negotiations, the draft power sharing formula was accepted by both President Rabbani and Engineer Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Hekmatyar refused to sign until it was approved by the SCC

Afghan Government troops claimed to have captured two districts, Chak and Daimirdad, in central Wardak Province, on 10 May, after pounding the Taliban with heavy weapons and aerial bombing raids.

Amir of Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan, Senator Qazi Hussain Ahmad, on his return from Afghanistan on 12 May, told reporters that there was substantial progress in the ongoing talks between the Afghan Government and Hezb-i-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Hezb-i-Islami officials in Kabul said that the first batch of a force of 12,000 troops of Hezb-i-Islami began arriving in Kabul on 13 May after the faction rejoined the Kabul Government. More troops were expected to reach Kabul soon. A Hezb commander, General Majid Niazi said "The deal between the two parties has basically been finalized and we have begun implementing the terms of the accord agreed between us". Under the accord, Hezb-i-Islami would be given posts of Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, and Minister of Finance. However, Hezb-i-Islami sources in Pakistan rejected the reports about the deployment of troops in Kabul and added that the agreement was yet to be signed.

Military officials in Kabul said that President Rabbani's troops, supported by air power, advanced some 15 km on 24 May and retook villages they had lost to the Taliban.

According to reports, the Taliban recaptured Chaghcharan, the capital of Ghor Province, on 30 May.

**JUNE**

The Taliban leadership and four other leaders, Chief of Hezb-i-Islami Mawlawi Yunus Khalis, Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami leader Mawlawi Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, Chief of NIFA Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani, and a representative of Professor Sibghatullah Mujaddadi, in a joint meeting in Kandahar, on 6 June, urged President Rabbani to step down to pave the way for formulation of an Islamic Government in Afghanistan.

**JULY**

The Afghan Prime Minister, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, in a forceful tone warned the Taliban to immediately withdraw troops from the outskirts of Kabul, otherwise the Taliban would be taught a lesson. On the other hand, the Taliban sources in Peshawar reiterated their determination to oust President Rabbani's Government at any cost.

Professor Sayyaf's Ittehad-i-Islami, an ally of President Rabbani, demanded removal of all communists and atheists from the Afghan Government. The party's central committee in a meeting in Paghman, near Kabul, also warned that their two ministers - Minister of Education and Minister of Information - would have to resign if they failed to "Islamise" the working of their respective Ministries.

The Taliban and the mainstream Shia Afghan group, Hezb-i-Wahdat, reached an agreement on peaceful co-existence in Afghanistan. A Hezb-i-Wahdat official said, in Peshawar, that officials of the two parties had already inked in the agreement in Maidan-Shahr, Wardak. He also said that the leader of Hezb-i-Wahdat, Karim Khalili, and founder of the Taliban movement, Mawlawi Mohammad Omar, were expected to meet somewhere in Afghanistan soon to formally sign the accord and make its contents public.

According to BBC, a pilot who flew a Russian-built Mig-21 jet-fighter from the Taliban-held Kandahar airport announced his defection to the Afghan Government after landing at Bagram air-base. He alleged in a press conference in Kabul that Pakistani technicians had helped repair and maintain the Taliban aircraft in Kandahar airport.

A new political and military alliance, comprising parties led by Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani, Professor Sibghatullah Mujaddadi, General Dostum, Nangarhar Shura, and Karim Khalili was formed to struggle for peace and transfer of power to a broad-based interim Government in Afghanistan. Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani, leader of NIFA, said on 17 July that the Broad-Based Islamic National Front for Peace in Afghanistan had not been formed in opposition to the Kabul regime or in support of the Taliban.

Heavy fighting was reported on 21 July between the Taliban and Hezb-i-Islami (Hekmatyar) in the Gomal Taboot area of Paktia Province.

## **AUGUST**

According to reports on 2 August, the Afghan Government airlifted troops to Shamshad Sar, headquarters of Ittehad-i-Islami, near the Pakistan/Afghanistan border in Torkham.

According to reports, the ruling Nangarhar Shura on 5 August, dispatched a sizeable number of its fighters to Torkham to crush the rebellion of a pro-Kabul Government commander near the Pak-Afghan border. A member of the Nangarhar Shura said that all customs, security and immigration staff at Torkham were removed and replaced by new people. He also said that the Shura was in full control of the situation and traffic on Jalalabad-Torkham highway was restored.

Reports said on 5 August, that the Taliban had assembled a big force in the southeastern Paktika Province, after defeating the forces of the Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The Taliban captured Taboot, which was the main base of Hezb-i-Islami Hekmatyar in the area.

Afghan Prime Minister, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, on 13 August, announced a cease-fire between his Government and one of its main rivals General Dostum.

The Taliban, on 22 August, captured the Hezb-i-Islami (Hekmatyar) military base in Alikhel, Paktia Province. Later, on 23 August, the Taliban overran the strong military base (Spina Shega) of Hezb-i-Islami in Paktia after fierce resistance that left several dead and injured. Spina Shega was of strategic importance

because of the road that connects it to the Hezb-i-Islami controlled district of Sarobi, located some 50 km east of Kabul on the main national highway leading to Jalalabad and Pakistan.

The Taliban captured the strategic military base of Hezb-i-Islami in Azra, Logar Province, and an Ittehad-i-Islami base in Bak, Paktia Province on 26 August. Government jets also bombed the Taliban positions in Wardak, Logar, and Paktia Provinces but could not repulse the advancing Taliban.

Following the latest victories of the Taliban, a high-level delegation of the Government, comprising of a close confidant of Ahmad Shah Masood, Dr. Abdullah and Deputy Prime Minister Qutbuddin Hilal, reached Jalalabad on 26 August to hold talks with the Nangarhar Shura. The delegation offered all possible assistance and cooperation to the Nangarhar Shura to counter the Taliban offensive.

## **SEPTEMBER**

A large strike force of Taliban, on 5 September, headed north towards Sarobi on the main Kabul-Jalalabad highway.

The Taliban claimed, on 6 September, that they had captured the strategic eastern district of Azra in Logar Province.

The ruling Shura of Nangarhar, on 7 September, dispatched troops to Hesarak to join pro-Kabul factions defending against the Taliban.

According to a military spokesman of the Afghan Government, the Taliban lost 15 posts, including the strategic mountain Sher Ali post in a pre-dawn assault on 7 September.

The Taliban, on 11 September, moved into Jalalabad, capital of eastern Nangarhar Province, taking effective control of the city after an hour long encounter with troops loyal to the Government.

According to a Taliban spokesman, the Taliban were advancing towards Laghman after consolidating their positions in and around Jalalabad.

An Afghan Government Official in Kabul said, on 13 September, that Taliban jets bombed the strategic town of Sarobi, after capturing Laghman Province.

Some 2000 Hezb-i-Islami Hekmatyar troops arrived from northern Afghanistan to reinforce the Kabul front-lines, an official spokesman in Kabul said on 21 September.

The Taliban captured Kunar Province, on 21 September, and completed their recent military sweep of eastern Afghanistan.

A spokesman for the Taliban said, on 23 September, that they had entered Tangi Abraishum (Silk Gorge) commanding the entrance of Sarobi. He also added that after capturing Dare Patch, their forces were advancing towards Faizabad, capital of Badakhshan.

In an unexpected move, the Taliban captured the strategically important Sarobi Town situated around 40 km to the east of Kabul, in the early hours of 25 September. Reports added that the Taliban had entered the outskirts of Kabul and fighting was taking place in Pul-e-Charkhi and Customs Office.

Two years after their emergence in Kandahar, the Taliban achieved their biggest military victory to date when they captured Kabul late night on 26 September. Reports added that after having consolidated their control over Kabul by Friday noon (27 September) the Taliban headed for Bagram air-base, north of Kabul, and captured it without resistance.

The Taliban, on 29 September late night, captured Charekar City, capital of Parwan Province. Reports added that the Taliban also overran Jabul Siraj, headquarters of the former Kabul Government commander, Ahmad Shah Masood and advanced up towards Salang. On the same day, they took complete control of Kapisa Province and continued their offensive by launching an assault on the Panjshir Valley, the native district and stronghold of Ahmad Shah Masood.

According to reports, the Taliban, on 30 September, gave General Dostum's troops a 24-hour deadline to withdraw to the other side of the tunnel.

## **OCTOBER**

According to Kabul Radio, on 2 October, the Taliban forces made an advance of 3 kilometers into the Panjshir valley, the stronghold of Commander Ahmad Shah Masood. In order to stop the advance of the Taliban, Commander Masood blew up the single dirt road in the entrance of valley on 1 October.

The Taliban, on 4 October, launched a strong offensive against the forces of the ousted Government, led by Commander Ahmad Shah Masood, to capture the entrance of the Panjshir Valley.

Commander Masood's forces, on 9 October, launched a two-pronged attack on the strategic town of Gulbahar, northeast of Kabul, and recaptured it. They also pushed back the Taliban from different parts of Kapisa Province. A spokesman of Masood said that the fighting which broke out around the Salang highway had continued for a second day and their forces had made major gains.

Jumbish-i- Milli leader General Dostum, Hezb-i-Wahdat (shia group) leader Karim Khalili and Commander of the ousted Government Ahmad Shah Masood - signed a defence pact, on 11 October, in Mazar-i-Sharif pledging to retaliate to any Taliban attacks against any of the groups. They agreed to form a defence commission to work out modalities of a unified command force.

The Taliban, on 13 October, conceded the loss of the towns of Jabul Siraj and Charekar, north of Kabul, to the forces of the ousted Government. Masood's forces pushed back the Taliban to within ten kilometers of Kabul. They also captured the strategic Salang valley from the Taliban.

The Taliban rulers in Kabul, on 14 October, ruled out negotiations with the ousted Government. Fighting between the Taliban and former Afghan Government forces raged near Kabul, on 14 October, as ousted Afghan President Rabbani reached Iran and a delegation led by ex-Ministers went to Russia to seek support against the Taliban.

The forces of Ahmad Shah Masood, on 19 October, pushed the Taliban back and took Bagram air-base and Qarabagh town. A spokesman for Masood said that forces of General Dostum were also involved in the fighting.

Top commanders of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, former Afghan Prime Minister, Commanders Zardad, Chaman, Qalam and Assam switched allegiance to General Dostum because of political differences with Hekmatyar.

According to reports, General Dostum's troops joined forces with those of the ousted Government for the first time, on 23 October, to attack a key pass some 20 kilometers north of Kabul.

The Taliban, on 25 October, claimed they had captured the western Province of Badghis, defeating General Dostum forces. However, a spokesman of Dostum denied the fall of Badghis to the Taliban.

A senior official of the Taliban said, on 27 October, that they were still prepared to negotiate with their rivals if they accepted the principle of a true Islamic Government.

The acting Information and Culture Minister in Kabul said that they had, on 28 October, repelled a major attack north of Kabul launched by joint forces of Dostum and Masood. He added that the anti-Taliban forces attempted to push towards Kabul from the area around Bagram but had faced fierce resistance from the Taliban; resulting in 150 alliance troops being killed and some 400 wounded.

## **NOVEMBER**

According to reports on 1 November, the anti-Taliban coalition forces of Ahmad Shah Masood and General Dostum launched an offensive against the Taliban in an attempt to capture two strategic passes north of the capital Kabul. However, the offensive failed and the front-lines remained unchanged.

The Taliban, on 2 November, said that forces loyal to the ousted Government tried to capture Dara-e-Noor district in Nangarhar, but were repulsed by the Taliban.

Reports, on 3 November, said that forces loyal to General Dostum and the ousted Government warned that they would push the Taliban out of Herat unless they accepted a cease-fire. A spokesman of General

Dostum said that 2,000 forces loyal to the ex-Governor of Herat, Ismail Khan, had been flown in from Iran and were ready to fight for Herat.

The UN Special envoy to Afghanistan, Norbert Holl, said, on 7 November, that the Taliban were prepared to withdraw their troops and heavy weapons from Kabul if a cease-fire agreement could be reached with the rival factions.

The Taliban, on 8 November, launched a massive attack against the ousted Government forces and captured two of Masood's strategic military posts north of Kabul. A Taliban spokesman said "we broke the first line of defence of Commander Masood in the mountain near Kalakan and Barikab and advanced towards the strategic Bagram air-base".

The Taliban, on 11 November, made a five kilometers advance north of Kabul and captured Mir Bacha Kot.

The Taliban official media said on 18 November that they had repulsed an attack by infantry forces of General Dostum in the western Province of Badghis. Reports added that, on 22 November, fierce fighting had erupted between the Taliban and General Dostum forces when the Taliban heavily attacked the rival positions near Murghab river in Badghis.

After nearly a month of stalemate on the front-lines north of Kabul, the Taliban, on 24 November, launched an offensive and pushed the forces of General Dostum and Commander Masood from Gul Dara and the First-aid post on the main Old road. The Taliban continued their advance, on 25 November, and claimed that they were in full control of Sara-i-Khwaja, Mir Bach Kot, Farza, Kakow and the strategic Gul Dara. The fighting was said to be continuing near Qarabagh, which is next to Charekar, capital of Parwan Province.

A senior Taliban official said on 30 November "they were ready to accept a cease-fire if their conditions; acceptance of a true Islamic Government by the anti-Taliban alliance and exchange of prisoners of war, were met."

## **DECEMBER**

The Taliban, on 7 December, forced a UN aircraft carrying Tajik opposition leader, Abdullah Noori, to land at Shindand military base in Farah Province. The aircraft was travelling from Iran to the northern Kunduz Province.

Fighters of Hezb-i-Islami Hekmatyar, on 17 December, took control of parts of Daulat Shah District in Laghman Province.

On 27 December, Taliban captured the hills overlooking Bagram air base held by the ousted forces of President Rabbani. They also seized control of Qarabagh district north of Kabul.

## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

### JANUARY

A special envoy of President Rabbani, Dr. Abdul Rahman, held talks with the representative of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in Mahipar, near Sarobi, on 1 January in a bid to resolve their differences. He also delivered a letter from President Rabbani for Hekmatyar. This was the fourth meeting between Dr. Abdul Rahman and the representative of Hekmatyar.

Professor Sayyaf, a close ally of President Rabbani, held a meeting with Pakistan's ISI officials at Torkham border on 4 January. He assured the Pakistani officials that he would convince President Rabbani to apologize to Pakistan for the attack on the embassy in Kabul and pay compensation for the damage.

According to reports on 6 January, the Government sent a delegation to Kandahar for talks with the Taliban; and two other delegations to Jalalabad and Bamyan to talk with the opposition groups.

A spokesman of the Taliban said on 6 January, that talks between an Iranian delegation and the Taliban leaders failed to improve the uneasy relations between Tehran and the Taliban. He also added that the delegation was told that Iran had a "one-sided and partial attitude" to the Afghan conflict, therefore, Tehran was not in a position to play any mediatory role".

The US Consul General in Peshawar, Richard Smythe, said on 8 January that the US appreciated and strongly supported President Rabbani's wide-ranging contacts with different Afghan groups to restore peace and find a solution to the Afghan dispute.

Iranian Foreign Minister, Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati, air-dashed to Islamabad on a surprise visit on 9 January, and immediately went into session with his Pakistani counterpart to discuss the Afghan situation. He called on Pakistan's President and Prime Minister and sought Pakistan's cooperation to resolve the Afghan problem. He also held a meeting with Sayed Ahmad Gailani, leader of NIFA in Islamabad.

Pakistan's President, Farooq Leghari, presided over a high level meeting, attended by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto among others, which exclusively deliberated on Afghanistan for three hours. A senior official said that the main item of the agenda was the Afghan situation and it came under detailed scrutiny.

According to reports, the Taliban and SCC began negotiations on 12 January, to work out a joint formula for a peaceful transfer of power in Kabul. Later, it was reported that both sides agreed not to resume any negotiations with the Afghan Government. They also agreed to continue the blockade of the highways and roads leading to Kabul as a measure to increase the pressure on the Government.

The Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, on 16 January, accused the Taliban of war-mongering and seeking to hinder peace in Afghanistan. "All Afghan factions have joined the caravan of peace, but the Taliban was not willing to help end the conflict," he said.

Mehmood Mestiri arrived in Islamabad on 12 January to resume his efforts to bring peace in Afghanistan. He held a meeting with Pakistan's Prime Minister on 16 January during which he was assured of Pakistan's full support to the UN efforts. He flew to Jalalabad on 17 January and held talks with the Nangarhar Governor on peace prospects. On 18 January, he went to Kabul for talks with President Rabbani. Talking to journalists in Kabul, he said that it had become clearer and clearer that there could be no solution through military means.

The Afghan Government, by sending two letters, apologized to the Government of Pakistan for the attack on its embassy in Kabul and promised compensation.

Mehmood Mestiri went to Kabul on 30 January to broker peace among warring factions there. He did not meet journalists on arrival in Kabul and his program was not disclosed.

## **FEBRUARY**

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry on 1 February admitted to have received a formal authentic letter of regret from the Kabul Government for the ransacking of the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul, but said the security situation in the Afghan capital was not feasible to reopen the mission. The Foreign Office spokesman added that President Rabbani's Government had also agreed to pay US\$ 15.3 million as compensation, and that they were examining the proposal carefully. However, Kabul radio rejected press reports that Afghanistan was ready to tender an apology and pay compensation to Pakistan for its Embassy in Kabul.

Reports, on 2 February, said that Mehmood Mestiri had returned to Islamabad after holding talks with President Rabbani and leaders of the Taliban Shura to establish a mechanism for the transfer of power, to set up a neutral security force and to demilitarize Kabul.

A few hours before the arrival of the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister in Kabul on 7 February, a two-member US delegation held a crucial meeting with President Rabbani and Commander Ahmad Shah Masood. After holding talks in Kabul, they flew to Jalalabad and held negotiations with the Governor of Nangarhar, Haji Qadeer. From Jalalabad, the US team travelled to Kandahar, the headquarters of the Taliban, to discuss the Afghan issue with the leaders of the Taliban.

Hectic diplomatic activities in Islamabad and Jalalabad continued on 8 February. Mehmood Mestiri met Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in Jalalabad; the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister arrived in Islamabad from Kabul for high-level contacts with Pakistani officials about the Afghan problem; General Dostum, who had arrived earlier in Islamabad, continued his talks with Pakistani officials and Afghan leaders in search of a solution to the Afghan crisis. He also held a meeting with Pakistan's President on 12 February. Meanwhile, a delegation of the Kabul Government headed by Dr. Abdul Rehman, a close aide of Ahmad Shah Masood, arrived in Jalalabad for talks with Afghan opposition leaders.

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar called on the US ambassador in Islamabad on 14 February. He also held a meeting with Pakistan's President, Farooq Leghari, in Islamabad.



The Afghan opposition leaders after four rounds of talks in Islamabad, though unable to form a grand alliance, agreed on a five-point strategy to deal with the long running crisis. They agreed to set-up a joint negotiating team for talks with the UN envoy and President Rabbani even before his stepping down, and to consider any attack by Government forces against any groups as an attack against all. However, the Kabul Government, on 14 February, dismissed the outcome of these talks as insignificant.

The UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, suggested the convening of an international conference to work out a way to establish peace and security in Afghanistan.

Afghan Foreign Minister, Najibullah Lafrai, went to Iran on 17 February to take part in a meeting with Iranian and Pakistani officials. Iranian Foreign Ministry said that no meetings were to take place directly between Pakistani and Afghan officials, and the talks would be through Iranian intermediaries.

US President, Bill Clinton, asked Afghan President Rabbani to collaborate with the UN efforts for the return of peace to Afghanistan.

Hezb-i-Islami (Hekmatyar) said on 24 February that it was considering a power sharing proposal by the Kabul regime, but ruled out any deal independently of its opposition colleagues.

Iranian ambassador to Afghanistan, Ghulam Raza Hadadin, on 25 February, held talks with Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami Afghanistan chief, Mawlawi Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, in Peshawar, in a bid to bring Afghan warring factions to the negotiation table. According to Harakat sources the ambassador urged the Harakat chief to extend cooperation to the Kabul government. The ambassador assured Mawlawi Mohammadi that President Rabbani had softened his position and was ready to hand over power to him (Mohammadi) or to Mawlawi Yunus Khalis. Mawlawi Mohammadi made it clear that his party would not take any steps in this regard unless the Taliban were taken into confidence.

Dispelling the impression that the US had any favorites in Afghanistan, a senior US official said, on 28 February, that Washington supported the UN efforts as the best vehicle to restore peace in Afghanistan. He further added that supporting the UN efforts did not mean to exclude other efforts like the OIC efforts for bringing peace in Afghanistan.

### **MARCH**

President Rabbani, on the invitation of Iranian Government, reached Tehran on 3 March. A Government spokesman in Tehran said that the aim of President Rabbani's trip was to boost bilateral relations between Afghanistan and Iran. "This was a routine visit to a friendly neighbor and a high-level continuation of a round of shuttle diplomacy which we started a few months ago and we have found to be useful", he further added.

President Rabbani went to Tajikistan on 7 February for two days of talks centered on Tajikistan's Islamic rebels, who have made Afghanistan their base.

According to reports, the Afghan Government expressed keen desire to see the Pakistan embassy reopened in Kabul and the desire had already been communicated to Islamabad by President Rabbani's Government.

General Dostum, on 31 March, left for Tashkent on his way to Washington. He was expected to meet American officials to discuss Afghanistan's affairs in the wake of a recent visit by President Rabbani's representative to the US. President Rabbani's delegation had been led by Dr. Abdul Rahman, a close colleague of Commander Ahmad Shah Masood.

#### **APRIL**

A spokesman of the Taliban, Mawlawi Wakil Ahmad, in an interview with BBC, rejected Mehmood Mestiri's statement that the Taliban were ready to hold direct talks with the Kabul regime.

The Deputy leader of the Taliban, Mullah Rabbani, in an interview in Quetta, denied receiving any support from Pakistan and refuted allegations that they had links with the ISI.

The US Senator, Hank Brown, began a fact-finding tour of Afghanistan, on 8 April, starting with a visit to Kabul for talks with top Government figures. He met Commander Ahmad Shah Masood and Afghan Foreign Minister, Najibullah Lafrai. In Jalalabad, he held separate talks with Haji Qadeer, the Nangarhar Governor, Prof. Sayyaf and Eng. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

The US assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, Robin Raphel, arrived in Islamabad on 17 April on a five day regional tour expected to focus on ways of resolving the civil war in Afghanistan. She went to Kabul on 19 April and held talks with President Rabbani, Commander Ahmad Shah Masood, and some other officials. She also went to Kandahar and held a meeting with the Taliban leaders.

Pakistan's Jamaat-i-Islami leader, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, went to Kabul on 21 April on a two-day visit aimed at speeding up negotiations toward an alliance between the Kabul Government and Eng. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan said, on 23 April, that ~~Pakistan~~ and Iran were working together to prepare the ground for convening an Afghan conference to resolve the crisis in Afghanistan.

Mehmood Mestiri, on 24 April, met Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani, leader of NIFA, in Islamabad and exchanged views with him on matters relating to Afghanistan.

Pakistan expressed their readiness to hold talks with the Kabul regime on all bilateral issues. Pakistan's Foreign Minister expressed this, in an interview to Voice of Germany.

## AID AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

### JANUARY

A UN convoy of 93 trucks delivered more than 2,500 MT of desperately needed food aid to the capital Kabul, on 6 January.

According to reports, an Awami Action Committee comprising social and political parties of Azad Kashmir asked Afghans to leave Rawalakot by 31 March 1996. However, this move was criticized by a number of parties and the people of Kashmir.

Pakistan once again closed the Torkham check-post and increased patrolling along the Durand Line, to stop the entry of Afghan families travelling without proper documents.

The Government of Canada pledged US\$ 4 million to UNHCR, UNICEF and UNOCHA for assistance in the fields of repatriation of Afghan refugees, maintenance programmes, health, water and sanitation, mine clearance and coordination.

WFP, on 24 January, announced its plans to send 180,000 MT of food aid to Afghanistan in 1996.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister confirmed, on 24 January, that Pakistan was assisting in the reconstruction and improvement of infrastructure facilities in some Provinces of Afghanistan, which are under the control of anti-Rabbani groups.

### FEBRUARY

According to reports on 1 February, a supply route west of Kabul was reopened by the Taliban near Maidan Shahr, leading to the arrival of badly needed food supplies in the capital and a resulting small reduction in prices.

ICRC began its emergency food airlift to Kabul on 3 February, by sending a cargo plane loaded with 15 MT of wheat flour and some medicine.

About 400 trucks carrying food and fuel arrived in Kabul on 7 February. The arrival of food supplies brought at least temporary relief to the Afghan capital, where supplies had virtually dried up and prices risen very steeply.

Reports said that WFP had accelerated the delivery of food rations to the population of Kabul. At the request of Kabul authorities, WFP was increasing its programme by ten per cent to reach a total of 250,000 of the capital's poorest residents.

A fifteen-truck UN flagged convoy of WFP, carrying 125 MT cooking oil, 60 MT sugar, 10 MT high-calorie biscuits and other humanitarian supplies, reached Kabul on 16 February.

**MAY**

US Assistant Secretary of State, Robin Raphel, said in an interview on 4 May, the US would continue to work through the UN special mission for Afghanistan and other countries interested in Afghanistan to help the Afghan Peace Process.

According to Taliban sources, on 5 May, a delegation of the Taliban led by the Governor of Herat Province visited Iran. During the talks in Mashhad, issues like security at the Iran-Afghan border, curbing narcotics trafficking, Afghan prisoners in Iranian jails and some other issues were discussed. Sources added that the Taliban Movement was considering the possibility of opening an office in Iran following an offer by the Iranian Government.

A six-member delegation of the Afghan Government, led by the Minister of Transport, Abdul Ghafar Saim, arrived in Islamabad on 6 May. The delegation was to hold talks with Pakistan's Foreign Minister and other officials to remove misunderstandings as well as to explore ways and means to enhance trade relations between the two countries.

Mehmood Mestiri, after a two-day visit to Kabul, during which he held talks with top Government officials, left Kabul on 9 May. According to Foreign Ministry sources, Mestiri held constructive talks with President Rabbani on a range of matters related to finding a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani, Leader of NIFA, said on 14 May that President Rabbani's Government had accepted his proposals for reviving the Supreme Leadership Council, comprising heads of all Mujahideen groups and entrusting it with decision-making power to resolve the Afghan problem.

Mehmood Mestiri, on 15 May, met Sayed Ahmad Gailani and discussed with him, in depth, the current situation in Afghanistan. They exchanged proposals and suggestions for speeding up efforts for a negotiated solution to the crisis.

Chief of Pakistan's Jamaat-i-Islami, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, went to Kabul on 17 May to broker an agreement between President Rabbani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The trip came amidst reports that both sides had already reached an understanding to, once again, accommodate Hezb-i-Islami Hekmatyar in the ruling set-up of Afghanistan.

Hezb-i-Islami leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, met President Rabbani in Mahipar, near the Afghan capital on 20 May. The talks were also attended by President Rabbani's ally Professor Sayyaf and Pakistan's Jamaat-i-Islami chief, Qazi Hussain Ahmad.

UN Special envoy to Afghanistan, Mehmood Mestiri, in a letter to the UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, asked to be relieved of his post for health reasons.

The first delegation of the Taliban to a western country, reached Germany to hold talks with German Government officials, NGOs and Afghans living there.

## **JUNE**

A German diplomat was nominated as the UN Special Envoy for Afghanistan to replace Mr. Mehmood Mestiri, to continue the UN peace efforts in Afghanistan, Radio Kabul reported. The name of the expected envoy was not mentioned in the report.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, Alauddin Broujerdi met General Dostum on 3 June in Mazar-i-Sharif to persuade him to join intra-Afghan peace talks.

According to Afghan sources in Peshawar on 9 June, the Government of Turkmenistan accepted the Taliban as a new political and military force in Afghanistan and allowed them to open a representative office on its soil, most probably in the capital Ashkabad.

Top Afghan leaders were invited to attend a three-day Senate hearing on Afghanistan beginning in the last week of June in Washington. "The invitation to 20 Afghan leaders have been sent by US Senator Hank Brown along with the letters from the Peshawar-based US Consul General, Richard Smythe, with the message to take part in the debate starting from June 25," confirmed an Afghan leader. This was the first time that the US had invited President Rabbani, the Rome-based former Afghan monarch Zahir Shah, leader of the Taliban Mawlawi Mohammad Omar, former President Sibghatullah Mujaddadi, Ahmad Shah Masood, and other top leaders. The report added that leader of Hezb-i-Islami, Engineer Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and leader of Ittehad-i-Islami Professor Sayyaf, had not been invited.

Afghanistan's Deputy Foreign Minister, Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai, on 15 June criticized the planned meeting of Afghan leaders in Washington, saying the sponsors had ignored some important pro-Government factions. He said that Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami, Professor Sayyaf's Ittehad-i-Islami, Ayatullah Mohsini's Harakat-i-Islami, and Wahdat-i-Islami Shia faction headed by Mohammad Akbari had not been invited.

The US Consul in Peshawar in his meeting with the Afghan Consul said that the US was keen to revive strong political and cultural relations with Afghanistan.

Former Afghan opposition leader and chief of Hezb-i-Islami, Eng. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, on 26 June, took the oath as Afghan Prime Minister in Kabul.

## **JULY**

The Iranian Foreign Minister welcomed the peace accord between President Rabbani and his rival Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Dr. Norbert Holl, Director of South Asia for the German Foreign Ministry, was appointed UN special representative for Afghanistan, UN spokesman, Sylvana Foa, announced on 10 July.

The UN Secretary General merged the OSGAP office with the Special Mission from 1 July, to be known as UNSMA.

The Afghan Prime Minister, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, on 10 July, pledged tough steps to protect civilians from official crime and corruption and imposed strict Islamic rules on civil servants. He unveiled an ambitious law and order programme aimed at halting corruption and restoring stolen property to its legal owners. He also warned that women would be required to wear traditional black dress and veil and that officials who did not stop work at prayer time would be sacked.

According to officials in Kabul on 14 July, the Prime Minister, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, ordered all cinemas in Kabul city shut down until they can show "suitably Islamic" films.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman said on 19 July that Russia was planning to reopen its embassy in Kabul.

While accusing the UN of lacking the necessary vigor, energy and vision to achieve a breakthrough in resolving the Afghan problem, Amnesty International urged the international community to redouble its efforts to find a solution to the human rights catastrophe in Afghanistan.

About 300 female workers at Afghanistan's radio & television station and film company called on Hekmatyar's Government to shelve any plans to ban the country's women from working.

Dr. Norbert Holl, UN special representative for Afghanistan, arrived in Islamabad on 23 July and assumed his assignment to try to broker peace in Afghanistan. Addressing a press conference on 25 July in Islamabad, he said "I appeal to the parties involved to stop this senseless bloodshed". He also said "I am not over optimistic as I am a professional and have seen crisis from which I have learnt my lessons. The Mestiri peace plan would be taken up but not in the same shape. We would want to formulate a neutral transitory mechanism".

## **AUGUST**

The UN Secretary General decided that OSGA should cease to exist. The decision was taken in order to strengthen UNSMA and to rationalize the UN political presence in Afghanistan.

According to reports, a 10-member delegation of independent Afghans from various parts of Afghanistan visited Kandahar and other southern Provinces at the invitation of the Taliban and met with Taliban leaders.

Ahmad Shah Masood, in an interview with an Afghan journalist from Radio France International, said that he wanted Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, to order an end to interference in Afghanistan's affairs as a first step towards holding sincere talks with the Afghan Government to resolve bilateral issues.

President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, in a letter to the President of the Security Council, described the ongoing war in Afghanistan as the most urgent problem of the present time, and called upon the international community and the leading powers to pay special attention to this problem.

The UN special envoy for Afghanistan, Dr. Norbert Holl, returned to Islamabad after his first visit to Kabul, Jalalabad, and Mazar-i-Sharif, where he held meetings with high officials on the peace process in Afghanistan. After his arrival he called on Pakistan's Foreign Secretary, Najmuddin Shaikh, and briefed him on his talks with the Afghan leaders. He also went to Kandahar and had a meeting with the Taliban leadership.

According to Radio Kabul, President Rabbani asked Dr. Holl to move his office to Kabul City to improve the effectiveness of his mission.

Dr. Norbert Holl, UN Special envoy to Afghanistan, held a meeting with the ACBAR member agencies, on 8 August at the Pearl Continental Hotel in Peshawar.

A high-level Afghan delegation arrived in Islamabad on 10 August for wide-ranging talks with Pakistani officials on trade and the supply of petroleum and food stuffs. Reports added that Pakistan's Foreign Office agreed to consider favorably the Afghan Government proposal for the re-opening of its Embassy in Kabul. Later, on 11 August, Pakistan's President and Prime Minister assured the visiting Afghan delegation that Pakistan would work together with the UN and support any bilateral, regional or OIC initiative to achieve peace in Afghanistan.

The US Senator Hank Brown, on 12 August, went to Kabul and held talks with Afghan Government senior officials on the current situation in Afghanistan. He also went to Kandahar and met with the Taliban leaders. On 13 August, he went to Mazar-i-Sharif for talks with General Dostum.

The UN special envoy to Afghanistan, Norbert Holl, on 18 August, went to Jalalabad and met the members of the Nangarhar Shura. From Jalalabad, he went to Kabul and had detailed talks with the Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister, Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai.

VOA reported that the Afghan Prime Minister, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, advised India not to repeat the same mistakes, which it had committed during the era of Dr. Najibullah by over-indulging in Afghanistan once again.

A six-member American diplomatic mission, headed by US Congressman Daniel Barker, held talks with Commander Ahmad Shah Masood and Deputy Foreign Minister Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai, in Bagram Air-base, 50 km north of Kabul. The delegation had also met with General Dostum in Mazar-i-Sharif.

**SEPTEMBER**

Official sources in Islamabad said, on 1 September, that Pakistan's mission in Kabul was likely to start functioning within next few weeks.

According to reports on 2 September by former King Zahir Shah; and to ensure equal treatment between all Provinces and parts in future.

The Afghan Government nominated Dr. Ghairat Baheer, son-in-law of Hekmatyar, as its new ambassador to Islamabad.

Leader of main Shia Hezb-i-Wahdat accused Iran of patronizing and training a rival faction in a bid to create disturbances in central Bamyan Province.

The Taliban spokesman, talking about ex-king Zahir Shah, said that the Taliban would invite not only Zahir Shah, but also other Afghan personalities living in Europe to return and help establish peace and an Islamic order in Afghanistan.

A US diplomatic mission, on 7 September, after talks with General Dostum, flew to Kabul and held meetings with Ahmad Shah Masood and Afghan Prime Minister, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The delegation, on 8 September, also went to Kandahar and met with Taliban leaders.

Afghan Government officials, on 12 September, accused Pakistan of providing assistance to the Taliban in their latest victories. However, Pakistan's Foreign Office denied giving any aid to the Taliban.

The Taliban Islamic Movement and Sayyaf's Ittehad-i-Islami party, on 14 September, rejected any role for Zahir Shah, saying he was unacceptable to them as well as to other groups in Afghanistan as a figure-head to lead an interim arrangement. Hezb-i-Islami sources in Islamabad also said that King Zahir Shah should not be imposed on the Afghan nation as he is unable to play any role in Afghanistan.

According to reports, the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, Murtaza Sarmadi, went to Kandahar to invite the Taliban authorities to a regional conference on Afghanistan to be arranged by Iran. "Sarmadi was told that the Taliban would not attend the conference because the Rabbani Government had been invited to it and the Taliban could negotiate with Kabul only after Rabbani had resigned" a Taliban spokesman said on 14 September.

Around 300 elders of Ahmadzai tribe in their traditional jirga announced full support to the Taliban and asked all Afghans to back them in order to pull Afghanistan out of the existing crisis and bloodshed.

A Taliban transport plane defected to Kabul Government and landed in Bagram airport, on 24 September, with 32 Taliban and seven Pakistanis on board.



The Taliban, after capturing Kabul late night on 26 September, formed a six-member council headed by Mawlawi Mohammad Rabbani to run Government affairs. A communique issued by the Taliban spiritual leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, called on the international community to extend diplomatic recognition to the new Government. It also announced the suspension of services of all diplomatic staff in Afghanistan's foreign missions and asked host countries to take care of Afghanistan's state property. The communique urged the UN and international relief agencies to resume their relief operations and reconstruction activities. The Taliban leader declared that in future all aspects of life in Afghanistan would be governed by strict Islamic laws. He said issues like women employment and girls education would be decided on the basis of Islamic teachings. "We are not against girl education but we want the women to be taught in accordance with the tenets of Islam", he further said.

Following the takeover of Kabul, the Taliban, on 27 September, hanged the former Afghan President Dr. Najibullah, and his brother who had spent the last four and half years in refuge at the UN office compound in Kabul.

The UNSMA expressed dismay over the killing of Dr. Najibullah by the Taliban. Amnesty International, as well as some nationalist parties in Pakistan, also condemned the assassination of Dr. Najibullah.

The Taliban ordered working women to stay home. "All sisters who have outside work should stay home until further notice" the Taliban-controlled radio in Kabul said. A spokesman of the Taliban said "we would pay the women employees so that they are not exposed to financial difficulties. But we stand by our decision that women cannot work in Government offices in future".

The Afghan Women's Council asked the UN to come to the fore and play its role for the rights of women in the present day situation of Afghanistan.

The former President of Afghanistan and leader of ANLF, Professor Sibghatullah Mujaddadi, on 28 September, hoped that with the victory of the Taliban Islamic Movement, the Muslim nation would witness a bright future by leading a peaceful and prosperous life within the framework of a truly Islamic Government.

The UN special envoy, Dr. Norbert Holl, went to Kabul on 29 September. He held talks with the Taliban leaders in Kabul and then returned to Islamabad. It was after about a year that Kabul airport reopened and the first plane that landed was the UN plane.

A delegation from Pakistan's Foreign Ministry, on 29 September, went to Kabul to hold talks with the new Taliban administration on bilateral issues.

A high-level team of Harakat-e-Inqilab-e-Islami also reached Kabul to meet the Taliban and discuss with them the future set-up in Kabul.

**OCTOBER**

NIFA proposed that the Taliban instead of pursuing military options should adopt a political approach to the Afghan conflict and cooperate with the UN Special Mission to convene *Loya Jirga* for the formation of a transitional Government of national unity.

The Taliban leaders in Kabul, on 1 October, unveiled a new softer policy for women. The caretaker deputy Foreign Minister said on 1 October that "according to Islamic rules, education is a must for women and is not limited for either men or women". He said that women would be allowed to go school and would return to work in Government offices.

Russian President Yeltsin, on 1 October, called for a special summit of CIS on Afghanistan. Meanwhile, Russian national security chief, Alexander Lebed said that the rise to power of the Taliban in Kabul posed a threat to Central Asia and Russia, and said that the Taliban wanted to annex parts of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

The UN special envoy to Afghanistan, Dr. Norbert Holl, went to Kabul on 2 October to discuss the current situation with the ruling Taliban authorities in Kabul. This was his second visit to the capital Kabul in 3 days.

Leaders of four Central Asian Republics and Russia gathered for a hastily called Summit, on 4 October, in Almaty to mull out how to respond to the Taliban capture of Kabul and their military advance northwards. At a press conference after the meeting, they warned the Taliban to steer clear of former Soviet Central Asia or face an appropriate response. The President of Kazakhstan said that the five nations would take adequate measures if the conflict spread across Afghanistan's northern borders. They also decided to set up a working group to monitor the situation and agreed to provide humanitarian aid to northern Afghanistan. However, the President of Turkmenistan decided not to attend the Summit to maintain neutrality in the Afghan crisis.

President of Uzbekistan said "if we really want to stop the escalation of war, we must do everything possible so that Dostum holds the Salang".

The Taliban spokesman debunked fears propounded by Russia and the Central Asian Republics as highly exaggerated; and an attempt by Kremlin to find an excuse to send more troops to the former Soviet colonies and further tighten its control over their borders.

The Taliban, on 5 October, warned both Russia and the Central Asian States not to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

Dr. Norbert Holl went to Kabul on 6 October and held detailed talks with the acting Foreign Minister, Mullah Mohammad Ghaus.

The Afghan acting Foreign Minister said that negotiations with Dostum were in process to workout modalities for a future Afghanistan set-up acceptable to all.

The US, on 7 October, warned the Taliban that they would not win international recognition unless they respected women's rights.

The Taliban, on 9 October, summoned Iran's senior diplomat in Kabul to the Afghan Foreign Ministry to protest after the Iranian spiritual leader accused them of giving Islam a bad name.

The Taliban, on 14 October, warned Iran against supporting troops loyal to the ousted Afghan Government in any possible attack on Herat Province.

The Iranian Foreign Minister, on 15 October, said "what was going on in Afghanistan affected our national security and that of the whole (Central Asian) region".

The Taliban on 15 October appealed for international recognition as the legitimate Government of Afghanistan.

A Pakistani delegation led by the Interior Minister undertook a visit to Afghanistan on 15 October in a bid to mediate between the Taliban and General Dostum. They visited Kabul, Kandahar and Mazar-i-Sharif for preliminary talks with the two sides. Later on, they took a three-member delegation of Jumbish-i-Milli and Hezb-i-Wahdat with them to Kandahar for negotiation with the Taliban.

The Indian Foreign Minister, following talks with his Iranian counterpart, on 18 October, appealed for Afghanistan to be allowed to sort out its problems alone without foreign interference.

Pakistan's Interior Minister, Nasirullah Babar, on 20 October, went to Mazar-i-Sharif to restart peace negotiations. He met two representatives of General Dostum and Commander Masood. General Dostum proposed a cease-fire in fighting near Kabul. Babar, later went to Kandahar to seek the Taliban response to Dostum's cease-fire proposal. However, it was announced on 21 October that the talks had ended without finalizing a cease-fire.

Assistant Secretary General OIC said on 21 October that the OIC was working out a plan to establish a cease-fire with a monitoring mechanism to be jointly set up by the OIC and the UN in Afghanistan to bring the war to an end.

UN special envoy Dr. Norbert Holl, on 21 October, warned the Taliban not to ignore human rights in Afghanistan. He referred specially to "discrimination along gender lines" referring to the Taliban ban on Afghan women working in public places and the ban on girls going to school.

According to reports on, 23 October, efforts for a cease-fire failed through the insistence of General Dostum and the forces of the former Government that the Taliban must demilitarize Kabul.

A day after Russia and Iran publicly declared their continued recognition of deposed President Rabbani's Government, the Taliban accused Russia, Iran and India of "aggression" against the Taliban administration in Afghanistan.

Lee Coldren, the State Department's Director of the office on Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh on 24 October said that the US supported a process of negotiation among the warring parties in Afghanistan. He added that US did not support the Taliban, had not supported and would not support them.

For the first time, on 28 October, a spokesman of General Dostum alleged that Pakistan was interfering in Afghanistan's affairs and assisting the Taliban.

According to reports on 29 October, the Taliban declared *jihad* (holy war) against General Dostum.

An International conference on Afghanistan, sponsored by Iran, started on 29 October in Tehran.

## **NOVEMBER**

A Taliban spokesman said, on 4 November, that the call by General Dostum for an Afghan peace forum had been dismissed by the Taliban.

The ousted Afghan President, Burhanuddin Rabbani, said on 5 November that the capture of the strategic western Province of Herat was more important for the former Government than Kabul. Therefore, efforts have been intensified to take control of Herat.

The Taliban, on 5 November, warned of possible military action against neighboring Iran if Tehran did not stop its alleged interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

According to reports on 10 November, deposed Afghan Prime Minister, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, in an interview with BBC in his native Kunduz Province, said he was not backing the anti-Taliban military alliance formed by General Dostum, Masood the former Defence Minister, and the Shia Hezb-i-Wahdat leader, Karim Khalili.

Foreign ministry sources in Kabul said on 13 November, that the Taliban had asked the UN not to invite the ousted President Rabbani as Afghanistan's representative to an international forum.

As the UN special envoy for Afghanistan, Dr. Norbert Holl, left for New York on 13 November to attend the international peace conference, his mission in Islamabad announced that it had finalized a revised draft proposal for a cease-fire between the Afghan warring factions.

The Taliban and their rival factions led by General Dostum and Commander Masood presented separate conditions for the formation of the UN sponsored commission for a permanent cease-fire in Afghanistan.

Reports, on 16 November, said that India had assured all political, diplomatic and moral support to the ousted Afghan President Rabbani to cope with the present situation in Afghanistan. This was conveyed by the Indian Prime Minister to Professor Rabbani during a meeting in Rome, where the two leaders were attending the World Food Summit.

According to reports, the Taliban on 15 November, nominated, Hamed Karzai, as the new envoy to the UN, asking the world body to recognize its seven week old administration in Kabul. Later, on 17 November, the Taliban again called on the UN to recognize them as the legitimate rulers of Afghanistan and to transfer the UN seat from the ousted regime.

Reports on 18 November said that 19 countries, including the US, Iran and Pakistan, opened a one-day meeting in New York to coordinate international efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan.

A public meeting held in Herat on 18 November condemned Russian and Iranian interference in Afghanistan and called upon the UN to recognize the Taliban Government in Kabul.

According to reports on 20 November, both Iran and India had stepped up efforts to develop strong diplomatic, political, and military links with the alliance fighting the Taliban.

The Taliban's Education Minister said, on 23 November, said that education of Afghan girls had not been banned by the Taliban Movement, but only suspended until a segregated system can be organized. "Lady teachers and girl students will be given permission to return to schools when a specific program has been organized for them by the Taliban," he added.

The Charge d'Affaires of the Afghan Embassy in Islamabad said, on 26 November, that no external power including Pakistan was helping the Taliban.

Reports, on 26 November, said that US Assistant Secretary of State, Robin Raphel, in a statement before the UN delegates, declared that "the current political and military stalemate in Afghanistan is not acceptable". She urged the international community to move the peace process forward rather than to accept the status quo, or allow it to return to the previous state.

The acting head of the ruling Taliban council of Kabul opened a seminar on peace and security in Afghanistan, on 26 November, declaring that his regime was mindful of the need to ensure security in people's daily lives.

The Norwegian Government agreed, on 23 February, to provide US\$ 2.83 million to Norwegian Church Aid for emergency humanitarian relief to Afghanistan.

### **MARCH**

According to reports, Pakistan would spend around US\$ 3 million to repair the road, which runs through five Afghan provinces controlled by the Taliban. President Rabbani's Government strongly reacted to this development and termed Islamabad's decision, to finance repair of the Chaman-Torghundy highway, as "a blatant interference in Afghan affairs".

Officials in Islamabad said that the Government of Pakistan had provided 20,000 MT wheat to WFP for supply to the Afghan people and another 20,000 MT wheat would be delivered to WFP shortly.

A spokesman of the Taliban, Mawlawi Wakil Ahmad, said that the Taliban would have no objection if a non-governmental organization was formed to undertake the road repairs with the Rs. 150 million assistance promised by Pakistan.

The EU urged the warring factions in Afghanistan to end fighting and allow humanitarian assistance to reach the war-affected people.

The British NGO OXFAM, in a distribution drive targeting the women of Kabul's poorest families, issued aid to women representing about 8,000 families. The assistance comprised blankets, children's clothes and heavy plastic sheeting to be used for insulation or covering doors and windows left uncovered as a result of the factional fighting.

BBC TV reported that UNHCR stopped food aid for about 5,000 Tajik refugees in northern Afghanistan on 31 March. The refugees were living in Sakhi camp, since they had fled the Tajik civil war three years ago.

### **APRIL**

The Afghan Government called an emergency meeting to discuss ways to bring its currency under control. According to traders, the Afghan currency (Afghani) was being traded on the very thriving black market at Afs. 12,500 to US\$ 1.00 (dollar) on 1 April, just half the value recorded 10 weeks ago.

Norway provided an amount of US\$ 1,572,326 to the UN for its relief activities in Afghanistan.

The CAR disclosed on 5 April that the number of refugee camps had been reduced from 112 to 47 throughout Pakistan; as a result of the cut in the foreign aid for Afghan refugees.

ICRC officials said on 23 April that it was setting up a 50-bed surgical Hospital in Kandahar Province. The facility should later be expanded into a 150-bed hospital in order to take over the work of the 13 year-old ICRC hospital in Quetta, Pakistan.

A tribal Jirga in Khyber Agency on 29 November pledged to revenge the murder of former Afghan President, Dr. Najibullah, and his brother, if the UN failed to identify and punish his murderers within five months.

An official of the Taliban accused New Delhi of openly attempting to de-stabilize the Taliban in Afghanistan by aiding its opponents.

## **DECEMBER**

Iran did not favor Pakistan's bid to block Indian involvement in regional and international peace efforts on Afghanistan. No country had the right to decide on the participation of others, said a report in the Hindustan Times.

Ghairat Baheer, a representative of Hezb-i-Islami Hekmatyar, disputed on 5 December a claim by a spokesman of the anti-Taliban alliance that it had formally joined the group in a bid to overthrow the Taliban authorities in Kabul.

Ousted Afghan President, Burhanuddin Rabbani, arrived in Tehran on 5 December, his second visit to Iran in three weeks. Rabbani was heading a political delegation to discuss developments in Afghanistan and bilateral relations with the Iranian President.

Iran's ambassador to Pakistan, Mohammad Mehdi Akhunzada, said on 7 December that his country was opposing the Taliban not on political grounds, but because they were damaging the reputation of Islam.

The Taliban authorities in Afghanistan in a new decree on 9 December instructed women not to work with foreign organizations or to visit their offices.

It was disclosed on 8 December by a source close to the UN, commenting on the UN Special Envoy Dr. Norbert Holl's visit to Kunduz, that an agreement had been reached, in principle, between the warring factions - the Taliban and forces loyal to Ahmad Shah Masood - for a bilateral and direct dialogue.

Foreign Ministers of the OIC on 9 December ruled to keep the Afghan seat vacant in the face of rival claimants.

On 16 December, the Taliban said that they were ready to participate in peace talks with opposition groups under the UN auspices.

The Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Iran and Pakistan would meet in Ankara, Turkey in January to discuss ways to end the civil war in Afghanistan.

The Taliban government has designated Mufti Mohammad Masoom Afghani as Afghanistan's Ambassador to Pakistan.

The caretaker Government of Pakistan appointed Aziz Khan ambassador at large to Afghanistan in a bid to start afresh negotiations with different political parties inside Afghanistan.

Both the Taliban and the UN denied reports that General Rashid Dostum and Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar had signed an agreement for an immediate cease-fire in Afghanistan.



## SECURITY MATTERS

### JANUARY

Four children were killed and 26 other civilians injured when rockets hit southern residential areas of Kabul city on 1 January.

At least six people were killed in a rocket attack on Kabul as the Taliban and Government forces exchanged artillery fire south of the city, Radio Kabul reported on 7 January.

According to Radio Kabul, at least five people were killed and eight others injured in a rocket attack on residential areas in Kabul on 9 January.

Four civilians were killed and 16 others, including nine children, injured, when 12 rockets slammed into Kabul on 11 January.

President Rabbani's offer of a cease-fire collapsed on 29 January when rockets hit the capital Kabul. It was also reported that Kabul was bombed by unidentified jets targeting the Presidential Palace and the Defence Ministry. At least one person was killed and three others injured.

At least ten civilians were killed and seven injured as Government troops and Taliban exchanged heavy artillery fire south of Kabul on 31 January.

### FEBRUARY

A Taliban spokesman said that their three jet-fighters bombed Balahisar Fort and Tappa-i-Scud in Kabul on 1 February. A BBC report from Kabul said that 7 people were killed and 20 wounded in the bombing raid.

About 110 people were killed and 70 wounded on 2 February in fighting between the rival Afghan mujahideen commanders in Kunduz Province in northern Afghanistan.

Two people were killed and six injured in a rocket attack on the Afghan capital, Kabul, on 4 February. The outer wall of the Presidential Palace was partly damaged in the attack.

At least three persons were killed and six others wounded in an encounter between commanders loyal to Ahmad Shah Masood and President Rabbani in Kehmard district of Bamyan Province.

Five people were injured when 15 rockets hit residential areas in Kabul on 14 February. Reports added that six houses were damaged in the attack.

Up to 60 people were killed and scores injured, on 15 February, when a huge explosion ripped through an ammunition dump at the Presidential Palace in central Kabul shattering windows and scattered debris and

shrapnel around the Palace. Defence Ministry officials said they saw about 60 bodies lying in the Presidential compound, most of them were reportedly military personnel.

Two civilians and three militiamen were killed in Kabul on 25 February in fighting between Government forces and the Taliban.

Three civilians were killed and six injured when two BM 21 rockets hit a road alongside a military installation near the center of the capital, Kabul, on 24 February.

Three people were killed and at least two injured on 29 February as a result of an artillery attack near the Presidential palace in Kabul.

### **MARCH**

Fighting for territorial control between commanders loyal to Hezb-i-Islami (Hekmatyar) and Ismaili militia of Sayed Mansoor Naderi in Baghlan Province in northern Afghanistan left scores of people dead over the past two days and created sharp differences in their anti-Rabbani alliance.

Three people were killed and four wounded in a second deadly rocket attack on the besieged Afghan capital on 9 March.

A Defence Ministry source in Kabul said on 12 March that the Government launched a major artillery, rocket and bomb attack on the Taliban besieging Kabul. The assault on the Taliban lines south of Kabul came after two days of attacks on Government front-line positions by the Taliban, he further added.

At least 18 civilians were killed and 16 injured when an artillery shell hit a busy street in the centre of Kabul on 24 March. According to Afghan sources, the death toll had risen to 23 by the next day, 25 March.

Many people, including 25 employees of UN Demining agencies, were wounded when a huge blast ripped through a Taliban ammunition dump, five kilometers from the centre of Kandahar City, on 25 March. There were no reports of any deaths, but it was possible that some Taliban guards were also injured as the blast was very strong.

Afghan Defence Ministry sources said that Government aircraft, on 26 March, bombed a Taliban base in Charasyab near Kabul killing at least 50 persons. In one of the air raids, a building was hit where the Taliban leaders from across Afghanistan were attending a meeting. Report added that about 20 persons were injured in the attack.

### **APRIL**

Radio Kabul reported on 5 April that the Taliban launched a two-pronged assault south of Kabul but were driven back by Government forces. The fighting left four dead after the Taliban fired several rockets on Kabul during their retreat, the report added.

According to Defence Ministry officials in Kabul on 6 April, fourteen Taliban were killed in an intense artillery and rocket battle with Afghan Government troops south of Kabul. Meanwhile, six civilians were injured when a barrage of rockets struck the city.

The administration of Nangarhar Province foiled a coup attempt against Haji Abdul Qadeer and arrested a gang of 80 armed people in Jalalabad on 6 April. There were conflicting reports about the affiliation of those arrested.

Two civilians were killed and 12 injured in overnight fighting and rocket attacks in Kabul, doctors and witnesses said on 7 April.

Officials in Kabul said, on 10 April, that Government forces heavily bombed the Taliban positions south of Kabul and seized a part of central Ghor Province from the Taliban.

Government sources in Kabul said on 13 April that President Rabbani's forces launched a major offensive in western Afghanistan to retake the strategic city of Herat from the Taliban. Government forces seized Tolak district in central Ghor Province, which borders Herat. The sources later claimed that they have moved over the mountains dividing Herat and Ghor Provinces and have advanced several kilometers into Herat.

Four persons were killed and six injured in a rocket attack in Kabul on 17 April. At least 26 rockets rained down in the residential areas and two rockets hit the Chinese Embassy.

## **MAY**

According to reports, rockets hit the Iranian Embassy in Kabul on 5 May, slightly wounding two members of staff and badly damaging the building.

The Taliban administration in Paktia Province, on 5 May, arrested a person recently accused of ambushing and killing four Taliban and wounding another three in Jaji area. The accused will be tried under Shariah law and punished, if found guilty.

Six civilians, including two children, were killed and another 18 wounded on 17 May when rockets hit a crowded bus stop near the densely populated Microryan area in Kabul city.

Two unidentified aircraft dropped bombs on three villages in Badakhshan Province, killing at least four people and wounding eight others, Radio Kabul reported on 18 May.

Ten people were killed and 36 injured when a heavy barrage of rockets hit crowded areas in Kabul City on 20 May.

At least 12 civilians were wounded on 23 May in heavy fighting between the Taliban and Government forces in Kabul. Government officials said that their troops foiled a Taliban offensive on the southern front on 23 May, and denied claims from the Taliban that three villages had fallen to them. Earlier, the Taliban had claimed that on 22 May they had seized three villages - Khurd Kabul, Malang and Chakari - in heavy fighting on a 15 km stretch on the southern front.

Five people including two children were killed and 12 wounded on 30 May when 20 rockets hit the Presidential Palace, Wazir Akbar Khan, Amani High School, and Shahr-e-Naw areas in Kabul city.

Meanwhile the Taliban claimed that they had intercepted an anti-Taliban convoy of about 100 people which crossed into Herat Province from Iran and was heading towards Ghor Province. The Taliban sources in Peshawar said that about 14 persons of the convoy were killed and 72 captured in the ambush.

A spokesman of the Taliban said, on 30 May, that around 50 persons of President Rabbani's forces were killed in an attack at Ainak near Kabul. They also claimed to have captured 100 Government troops alive along with three of its top commanders. Officials in Kabul earlier claimed that President Rabbani's troops had captured a string of hills in the southeastern district overlooking Logar Province.

## **JUNE**

Defence Ministry in Kabul said that 5 Government soldiers and 25 of the Taliban fighters were killed on 1 June in fighting southeast of Kabul following a major offensive by the Taliban. It also said that Government jets dropped cluster bombs on the Taliban positions.

One person was killed when rockets landed in a residential area of Kabul, close to Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital, on 7 June.

Five people were killed and seven injured in a rocket attack on Kabul City, Radio Kabul reported on 13 June.

Radio Kabul reported on 14 June that seven people were killed and 20 injured as rockets slammed Kabul City. Seven houses were also destroyed in the attack.

Two people were killed and 25 injured in a powerful bomb explosion in Jalalabad City on 16 June. The blast, which was caused by a bomb hidden on a bicycle, occurred near the official residence of the provincial Governor, without causing any damage to the building.

According to officials in Kabul on 23 June, 22 civilians were killed and 26 injured in a rocket attack in Kabul. Two rockets struck a crowded bus stop and a school in the southern suburbs of the city.

Officials in Kabul said that 61 persons were killed and more than 100 injured, on 26 June, when rockets hit Kabul City just ahead of the arrival of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to become Prime Minister. Four rockets pounded the side of the hill near the hotel as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar arrived there to be sworn in.

**JULY**

General Alauddin Khan, adviser and military strongman of Ismail Khan, the former Herat Governor, was killed on 5 July. According to Afghan sources, the General with his followers crossed Iranian border on 5 July and were on their way home when one of his bodyguards opened fire on him in Pashtoon Zarghoon, Herat Province. More than 10 of his followers were also killed in the encounter. Sources added that after the fall of Herat to the Taliban, General Alauddin and Ismail Khan took refuge in Iran and used to pay secret visits to his native town in Herat.

At least seven people were killed and 26 wounded in a rocket attack on a busy market place in Kabul on 18 July.

Several rockets hit the Prime Minister's House, the official residence of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, in Kabul on 19 July, killing at least 9 and wounding 13 persons.

Several persons were killed and wounded when a number of rockets hit Kabul City on 20 July.

According to reports from Kabul, a number of shells hit the Wazir Akbar Khan area of Kabul City on 24 July, narrowly missing the UNICEF office. The attack came on the fourth day of a five-day cease-fire arranged by UNICEF to allow the second round of its massive polio vaccination campaign to go ahead throughout Afghanistan. Two persons were injured and nearby buildings were damaged in the attack.

**AUGUST**

A cease-fire came into effect in Nangarhar Province, on 3 August, after fierce tribal fighting over disputed land claimed about 20 lives and caused huge material loss. The warring tribes have also agreed to hand over their heavy weapons to the Shura.

One person was killed and five sustained injuries in fighting between the Taliban and Hezb-i-Islami Hekmatyar in Bak area of Khost Province.

Fourteen persons were killed in Nangarhar Province, near Pak-Afghan border, on 17 and 18 August, when the ruling Shura launched an attack to capture a rebel military commander's base. Reports added that 34 armed Afghans who were trying to cross over to Pakistan after the defeat of their commander, Khurshaid, were arrested by Pakistani border guards in Shalman area of Khyber agency.

Four people were killed and 19 others wounded when rockets hit residential areas in Kabul on 19 August.

**SEPTEMBER**

Two civilians were killed, 14 injured and 6 houses destroyed when a number of rockets hit Kabul City on 1 September.

A jet believed to belong to the Taliban Movement bombed Hekmatyar's stronghold Sarobi, on 9 September, but no casualties were reported.

According to reports, on 11 September, three famous Nangarhar commanders, Engineer Mahmood, Ustad Saznoor, and Nader Arab together with their 67 bodyguards were killed in an ambush by another commander near Dacca, about 8 kilometers from the Torkham border.

Reports said that at least 150 people were killed on 12 September in a Government forces counter offensive and a heavy air bombardment in Jalalabad City.

Twelve people were killed and 50 others injured when Kabul Government jets bombed the Royal Palace in Jalalabad City on 15 September.

Fierce fighting took place, on 18 September, between the Taliban and Government forces in Laghman Province leaving at least 18 dead.

Afghan Government jets bombed Jalalabad City, on 20 September, injuring at least two people. Later on 22 September, the positions of the Taliban in Laghman and the Jalalabad highway came under bombardment.

ICRC said on 25 September that several hundred people were killed or wounded in fighting between the Taliban and Government forces outside the Afghan capital Kabul.

## **OCTOBER**

According to reports on 5 October, the crime rate in the Afghan capital, Kabul, has dropped sharply since the Taliban took control of Kabul.

Reports on 11 October said that more than a third of Kabul's foreign aid community evacuated the city as fighting between the Taliban and forces loyal to the ousted Government moved towards the capital.

Two Argentine journalists were detained for several hours by the Taliban in Kabul after filming women on the street, a UN spokesman said on 17 October.

Forces loyal to the ousted Government, on 20 October, fired rockets on Kabul International airport as the Taliban brought in hundreds of reinforcements to defend the city. It was reported that fighting was raging just 25 kilometers from the city.

Amnesty International (AI) expressed concern over the safety and security of civilians in Afghanistan, particularly in and around Kabul and urged the Taliban and all other warring factions to desist from targeting civilians and abide by basic humanitarian principles as contained in the laws of armed conflict. It also expressed concern over the situation of women in Afghanistan particularly in those areas controlled by the Taliban.

Taliban jets, on 24 October, bombed an Afghan village some 20 km north of Kabul, killing at least 14 people including women and children.

Taliban jets, on 25 October, bombed Jabul Seraj, a town held by Masood forces near to the Salang valley.

General Dostum's jet fighters bombed Taliban positions in Deh Sabz village, some 25 km northeast of Kabul on 26 October. It was followed by another air raid on Kabul for the second night on 27 October, in which at least 3 bombs appeared to fall on the area near Kabul airport. Reports also added that heavy fighting was going on near Deh Sabz village. Later, on 28 October, a jet again dropped bombs on Taliban front-lines causing light casualties.

### **NOVEMBER**

The Taliban said on 2 November that a jet belonging to General Dostum, which had bombed Kabul killing 3 civilians, was shot down.

General Dostum's jets, on 4 November, bombed Herat airport in western Afghanistan. A spokesman of the Taliban said "they dropped bombs around Herat airport but they caused no damage to the facility".

Reports from Kabul, on 6 November, said that jet fighters of General Dostum bombed Taliban positions and other areas in Kabul. Two civilians were reported dead and three others wounded. Reports added that a bomb strike by a low-flying anti-Taliban jet narrowly missed the military advisor to the UN peace mission to Afghanistan, Colonel William Egar, on the last day of his tour on 6 November. The jet strike occurred when the UN team was visiting the heavy weapons site of the Taliban about 30 km north of Kabul.

At least 20 civilians were killed in a Taliban attack on Bagram, north of Kabul. Most of them were killed when five rockets hit a village on 11 November, while others died in hospital.

General Dostum's jet fighters, 15 November, bombed the Taliban-held Herat and Shindand airport. However, there were no reports of any human or material loss.

The Taliban, on 22 November, shot down a jet belonging to General Dostum, as fighting flared up between the two forces in the northwestern Province of Badghis.

Jets belonging to the anti-Taliban alliance bombed Kabul on 29 November injuring three civilians, local medical staff said.

### **DECEMBER**

On 10 December, jets of the anti-Taliban coalition bombed Istalif, about 40 kilometers north of Kabul, causing unspecified casualties.

At least 50 refugees displaced by factional fighting in north-western Afghanistan died of cold during the past few weeks.

Eight people were killed and more than ten injured when an unidentified jet heavily bombed Taliban positions in Mir Bacha Kot district north of Kabul.

Central Kabul residential areas were bombed on 28 December by anti-Taliban alliance jets. No casualty figures or details were made available immediately.



**MAY**

While addressing the annual meeting of the ADB, Afghanistan's Chief Delegate, on 2 May, appealed for global multilateral aid to rebuild Afghanistan, so that Afghans would stop "being killed or have to kill to earn a living".

The UN, on 2 May, launched an urgent appeal for US\$ 50 million in aid which would go towards mine clearance in Afghanistan. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Afghanistan, Martin Barber, said that the UN had received "less than 30 percent" of the US \$ 124 million requested from the international community in an appeal launched October 1995 and that US\$ 50 million was urgently required in the next five months.

ODA was to provide a further US\$ 2.7 million of emergency aid to Afghanistan, as part of its response to the UN consolidated appeal for Afghanistan.

According to reports, the Salang tunnel, the strategic highway linking the besieged capital Kabul to northern Afghanistan, was reopened for humanitarian aid supplies on 20 May, after being shut for two years by factional fighting. An ICRC convoy, carrying 75 MT vegetable oil to Kabul, used the tunnel following an agreement between the Government and General Dostum to demine and open the road, running through their common front-lines.

**JUNE**

The US, through its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, granted US\$ 50,000 to the IFRC for the purchase of disaster relief supplies to be used in Afghanistan. With this grant, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance has contributed US\$ 385,000 in cash and in kind of disaster relief in Afghanistan during fiscal year 1996.

Afghanistan's Deputy Prime Minister, Sayed Ali Jawid, went to Iran on 6 June to attend the first session of a joint Iran-Afghan economic commission. The commission was to finalize the mode of disbursement of US\$ 50 million Iranian economic assistance to Afghanistan.

Officials in Kabul said, on 9 June, that President Rabbani had approved the allocation of US\$ 10 million towards buying food for Kabul residents suffering under the pressure of inflation.

Iran and Afghanistan signed a memorandum of understanding to promote bilateral cooperation in economic and technical fields, IRNA reported on 12 June.

WHO and UNICEF, the two major agencies contributing to the Afghan Mass Immunization Campaign, were facing a shortfall of US\$ 600,000 to carry out the vaccination programme in Afghanistan.

## OTHER NEWS

### **JANUARY**

Two vehicles of a mine clearance organization, Afghan Technical Consultants (ATC), which were hijacked at Sarobi in December were returned after an ATC delegation visited the area and held talks with local Hezb-i-Islami authorities.

AI, on 16 January, renewed its call for the international community to play a role in ending the catastrophic human rights abuses caused by 16 years of conflict in Afghanistan.

### **FEBRUARY**

Reports said that the Pakistan Government had asked the Special Branch Police to conduct a survey of foreign NGOs active in NWFP in connection with the new policy on NGOs.

The Taliban on 9 February publicly executed two Afghan murderers in Khost. Fathers of two murdered persons, including a Pakistani, were provided the opportunity under the Qisas laws to shoot the convicts, one by one, before a gathering of thousands of Afghans. The murderers were found guilty by Qazi courts (Islamic courts), established by the Taliban in areas under their control.

A Taliban helicopter, which was on its way from Ghazni to Kandahar, crashed in Zabul Province. All 20 people, including the pilot, were reportedly killed.

The Afghan Government released 18 Pakistanis held in Kabul prisons, 15 of whom were flown to Islamabad by ICRC on 18 February.

### **MARCH**

The US said on 1 March that six countries including Iran and Afghanistan would face sanctions for failing to make adequate efforts in fighting the war on drugs.

The Taliban hanged a Pakistani in Spinboldak (Kandahar, Afghanistan) on charges of double murder and stealing a vehicle.

The Afghan capital, Kabul, was provided with electricity for the first time in two years. Electricity has been supplied from a Hydel power station from an area which was under control of President Rabbani's forces.

Two more mass graves, believed to contain not less than 100 bodies, were found in eastern Afghanistan.

A crowd of more than 5000 people thronged a central Kabul park on 30 March to watch the public hanging of three convicted murderers - a military officer, a soldier, and a butcher - in the Afghan capital. A senior Defence Ministry official said that the execution marked a change in the Afghan Government's policy towards crime in Kabul, which was rising.

**APRIL**

More than 45 had died, 70 others were missing, and up to 120,000 people affected when flood triggered by seasonal rains and melting snow in southern Zabul, Helmand, Nimroz, Faryab, and Badakhshan Provinces.

The Taliban seized a big consignment of contraband drugs in Paktia Province. A press release said the Taliban's district administrator of Ahmadkhel, recovered 440 kg of Hashish from a truck on its way from Jalalabad to Gardez.

A team of Diplomats of European countries and representatives of NGOs went to Kabul on 15 April to assess the situation arising out of the use of land-mines in the ongoing fighting in Afghanistan. According to the Coordinator of the Afghan Campaign to Ban Land-mines (ACBL) who had organized the programme, members of the delegation were to urge the Kabul administration not to use land-mines and, at the same time, to fully support a total ban on the same.

**MAY**

The Federal Assembly - Parliament of the Russian Federation - in a statement issued on 7 May, appealed to the leadership of the Taliban to display humanity and goodwill and release the crew-members of Russian aircraft held by them.

An Afghan couple residing in Tehkal area, Jamrud Road, Peshawar were killed by unknown assailants late in the night of 7 May. According to reports, the assailants also kidnapped two daughters of the slain couple.

**JUNE**

According to reports, some armed persons entered MADERA, a French NGO, office late on 29 May night. They locked up the 3 watchmen in a room and took away cash amount of US\$ 55,000 and Afs.300,000. They also took a Pick-up vehicle, but the law enforcing agencies of Jalalabad recovered the vehicle and were trying to apprehend the culprits.

A UN official said in Kabul on 19 June, a sum of US\$ 70,000 had been stolen from UNHCR office in Kabul.

**JULY**

Afghanistan sent a team of sportsmen to Atlanta to participate in the Olympic Games for the third time in its history.

According to reports on 11 July, a young couple was stoned to death on the charge of having illicit relations in the Taliban controlled Province of Kandahar.

**AUGUST**

The Afghan Balkh Airline, started a regular air service between Peshawar and Mazar-i-Sharif on 17 August.

The seven Russian, Ukrainian and Tatar crew members of Tatar Airline cargo plane, which was force-landed by the Taliban in Kandahar one year ago escaped on 16 August. They managed to escape in their own plane from Kandahar airport and landed at Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates.

The Taliban formed a force to stop drug trafficking through its territory to Turkmenistan and Iran, AIP reported on 26 August.

**SEPTEMBER**

According to reports on 4 September, some 200 Afghan women marched on the streets of Kabul, to protest against the Taliban, accusing them of violating rights of women.

Reports from Torkham border said that hundreds of male members of Hindu and Sikh families were slipping in to the Taliban controlled Jalalabad as the Taliban assured them they would obtain their lost properties back.

According to reports, hundreds of Afghan refugees and trucks carrying goods were stranded at Torkham due to the closure of the Pak-Afghan border on 30 September.

**OCTOBER**

In the first week of October, the Taliban started implementation of strict Islamic law in the capital, banning the taking of photographs of people and ordering the punishment of anyone caught missing prayers. In another decree, men were given six weeks to grow beards or face punishment.

The International agencies working in Kabul prepared a Position Statement on 5 October representing the stand point of all international humanitarian aid agencies in Kabul. In the paper international agencies respectfully requested that the authorities in Kabul act with all possible urgency on some issues of key importance to them.

The Peshawar-based Afghan Consulate General resumed its function when the Taliban nominated, Mawlawi Shahabuddin, assumed the position of Consul General on 9 October.

According to reports on 14 October, the Taliban made a bonfire of Indian movies at a central Kabul cinema as part of their campaign to apply strict Islamic principles.

Thousand of Muslims held special prayers in mosques across Bangladesh, on 25 October, in support of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Hundreds of Afghan refugees including women, staged a procession on 28 October in support of the Taliban at the displaced persons camp at Hisar-shahi near Jalalabad.

### **NOVEMBER**

The Taliban, on 7 November, called on Afghans to return treasures looted from the capital's museum.

The Taliban asked the world community to come forward to assist them in the eradication of drugs and its sources from Afghanistan. A delegation of the Taliban, headed by the director of Nangarhar anti-narcotics department, also met officials of UNDCP in Peshawar and Islamabad to discuss the measures being taken for the control of the drug menace.

The Taliban, on 19 November, dismissed the AI report, which accused it of human rights violations as unjustified and unsustainable.

A dozen Afghan men arrested by the Taliban for gambling had their faces blackened in punishment and were paraded through the streets of Kabul on a military truck on 30 November.

### **DECEMBER**

No cases of AIDS have been reported in Afghanistan, an official of WHO disclosed on 1 December.

The Afghan Consulate in Peshawar, after a long time, has started information collection about those helpless and poor Afghans, who are imprisoned in various jails of Pakistan.

The Taliban are said to have arrested dozens of Afghans and sent them behind bars until they grow proper beards, as ordered by the Taliban Islamic Movement.

Former Afghan President Babrak Karmal, 70, died on 2 December in a hospital in Moscow.

On 5 December, Taliban handed over the recovered vehicle of Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA), which was stolen at gunpoint in Kabul during the previous Government.

A British newspaper reported that human bones, broken up to prevent identification, were mixed with animal poultry feed to be exported to Pakistan. The human bones were taken out by Afghan children in order to financially support their families.

Seven Afghan males convicted of adultery have been stoned to death in the Taliban controlled areas in Afghanistan over the past six weeks, a Taliban official said in Kabul on 14 December.

Three people, including two minors and one woman, of Afghan refugee families died of cold and poor living conditions at Nasir Bagh refugee camp in Peshawar.

A man was publicly shot dead in Kabul on 18 December. This was the first such execution by the Taliban since they captured Kabul. The murderer had killed three children and a woman.

A 35-year old Afghan was publicly shot dead on 27 December in Herat Province. He was prosecuted and condemned for killing four people in Adreskan district.



**JULY**

The CAR, in a press release issued on 9 July, said that following new developments in Afghanistan, the repatriation process of Afghan refugees from various camps in NWFP had reportedly accelerated.

A top official in Kabul said on 22 July that the Afghan Government had set up a special commission to probe a wave of forged local currency notes that were flooding into Kabul's money exchange markets.

The value of the Afghan currency, the Afghani, touched the lowest rates of its history in the local currency markets on 24 July when 100,000 was sold at Rs. 195. President of Afghanistan's Central Bank said in Kabul that General Rashid Dostum had printed the 10,000 notes in order to cause a set back to the Government in the economic sector.

The CAR asked rich Afghans to finance certain health and educational projects in the NWFP refugees camps, which were facing complete closure due to a sharp decrease in foreign assistance. As many as 25 schools and 15 hospitals/ dispensaries in different refugee camps in NWFP were running out of finance.

**AUGUST**

ODA announced further grants as part of its continuing response to the situation in Afghanistan. An NGO (Afghanaid) was provided grants of Pounds Sterling 250,000 for a food emergency programme in Badakhshan Province and Pounds Sterling 100,000 for a village rehabilitation programme in Jawzjan Province.

Pakistan in a meeting with an Afghan delegation on 10 - 11 August, agreed to facilitate Afghan trade with China through the Karakoram Highway. Pakistan also agreed to the proposal of meeting the fuel and food requirements of Kabul City from the local market.

An ICRC convoy carrying 45 MT cooking oil reached Kabul, on 19 August, from northern Afghanistan via the Salang highway.

Afghan Prime Minister, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, on 20 August, announced a formal agreement with General Dostum to reopen the Salang Highway from Kabul to the northern Provinces. The representatives of the two sides, in a meeting in Mazar-i-Sharif, also agreed on exchange of some of the prisoners of war held by the two sides.

**SEPTEMBER**

A four-member Afghan trade and commerce delegation arrived in Peshawar, on 6 September, to hold talks with their Pakistani counterparts for the purchase of edible oil and food stuff.

Reports from Kabul said that fuel prices increased by 75 percent in Kabul as the Taliban banned oil supplies to the city. However, food prices appeared nearly stable as the Taliban allowed consumer goods through the southeastern Kabul-Kandahar highway.

According to the News, following the fall of Jalalabad between 700 to 800 families entered Pakistan; resulting in a setback to the repatriation process of Afghan refugees.

Reports on 26 September said that due to intense fighting in Afghanistan, a large number of Afghans were crossing over into Pakistan via Kurram agency.

According to reports, on 29 September, two Red Cross aircraft landed at Kabul airport carrying much-needed relief supplies.

## **OCTOBER**

WFP reported it was sending as much food aid it could to Kabul City. The UN had stockpiled supplies to feed more than 200,000 people for two months.

The UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, on 7 October, said that concern had been expressed in recent days regarding the status of women and girls in Afghanistan. He added that the crackdown on women could affect relief and construction aid to Afghanistan.

The Taliban on 8 October branded as "unfair" the warnings from the US and the UN that international aid to the administration in Kabul would be threatened if it did not reverse its ban on females working and studying.

According to reports on 11 October, the flow of Afghans from Kabul towards Pakistan was continued; they were facing food, shelter and accommodation problems.

As fighting continued in Afghanistan, and a fresh influx of wounded was filling hospitals in Kabul, Kandahar, and Jalalabad - the ICRC reinforced its staff in Kabul by dispatching an extra surgical team from Quetta.

UNHCR, on 19 October, ceased assistance to the new refugees. A senior official said that UNHCR would wait and see before making up its mind on the fate of thousands of newly-uprooted people from Nangarhar Province.

An international aid agency, Save the Children, on 26 October, threatened to suspend aid projects affected by the Taliban ban on women working and girls going to school. It also called on other aid agencies to halt educational and non-emergency aid projects in areas of Afghanistan where women were discriminated against - in schools and offices.

## **NOVEMBER**

Reports, on 5 November, said that hundreds of civilians had fled from the northwestern Province of Badghis, where the Taliban were battling General Dostum forces. At least 550 civilians, mostly women and children, arrived in Herat City from Murghab district of Badghis, carrying only a few possessions.



The US donated 11 ambulances to the UNOCHA Mine Clearance Programme. The ambulances were handed over by the US Ambassador in Pakistan to the UNOCHA Coordinator in Islamabad on 6 November.

UNHCR finalized its strategy to be able to provide two meals per day to around 467 families in the newly established camp at Nasir Bagh. However, hundreds of war-displaced families were living under the open sky facing a shortage of tents and plastic sheets. UNHCR, on 11 November, estimated the current daily arrival of registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan at between 600 to 700, excluding those families taking shelter with relatives.

The UN sources, on 14 November, said that they had called a conference to highlight the displaced persons crisis in Afghanistan, where tens of thousands of people remain out of reach of aid programmes.

The Taliban claimed that the financial condition of the country was improving as the people put their confidence in the leadership of the Taliban.

Foreign aid agencies said, on 17 November, they were concerned whether their relief programmes would be able to feed Kabul's burgeoning population of poor and needy during the coming winter.

UNHCR suspended its' activities in Kabul on 20 November after weeks of harassment by armed Taliban. Four UNHCR staff had been arrested by the Taliban since last month on unspecified charges and despite repeated contacts none had so far been released.

UNDP agreed to shift the venue of the donors Conference on Afghanistan from Peshawar to Geneva, after Pakistan objected to an invitation being extended to India. The Conference was to be held on 2 - 3 December in Peshawar.

The Taliban, on 23 November, said that they paid for most of their administration running costs with income from Custom duties.

## **DECEMBER**

The Press Spokesman of ICRC said that emergency winter food would be distributed to families, displaced, as a result of fighting between the Taliban and the rival factions in northwestern Badghis Province. These families have fled from Badghis to the neighboring Herat Province. ICRC had identified 150 families as the most needy and would start emergency food supplies for them.

An appeal for US\$ 133 million to fund urgent relief and rehabilitation work in Afghanistan was launched by the UN and NGOs in Kabul on 3 December.

Iran planned to help reconstruction of Afghanistan after the country has achieved peace, President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani told the ousted Afghan President on 5 December.

Ariana Afghan Airlines commenced domestic service flights on 8 December to some cities under the control of the Taliban - Herat, Jalalabad and Kandahar.

Pakistan and Taliban delegations held talks in Kandahar on the laying of a regional gas pipeline and carrying out road repairs for improved traffic between Kandahar and Chaman, said a Pakistan Foreign Office source on 9 December.

The EC committed food aid worth approximately US\$ 11 million for people of Afghanistan.

On 11 December, UNHCR announced its preparation to fully resume its operations in Kabul after the Taliban released all four of its staff members without charges.

Pakistan gave the Taliban machinery and equipment worth more than US\$ 1 million for the repair of a highway linking Afghanistan with Central Asia. Pakistan promised cash assistance of around US\$ 2.5 million to help expedite the completion of the project. The machinery was delivered on 18 December.

## MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

### JANUARY

According to reports, on 10 January, Commander Ahmad Shah Masood, unveiled a four-point plan for the transfer of power and the restoration of peace in Afghanistan. He said that the opposition must agree on a cease-fire, to open highways, exchange prisoners and begin political talks. However, the plan was rejected by Taliban, saying that the plan did not offer anything new.

Hezb-i-Wahdat (Khalili group) strongly refuted the reports regarding a peace agreement with President Rabbani's Government. Wahdat sources said that their party was part of the Coordination Council and could not adopt any individual approach towards the Afghan Government.

General Dostum, in an interview with BBC in London, said that he considered the Taliban a part of the Afghan nation.

The Taliban, on 23 January, strongly turned down President Rabbani's offer to observe a cease-fire during the month of Ramazan. Hezb-i-Islami (Hekmatyar) also did not respond positively to the offer.

### FEBRUARY

Fresh fighting erupted in Kabul on 6 February when the Taliban reportedly launched another offensive. Forces loyal to President Rabbani said they repulsed, what they term, a probing assault by the Taliban on a southern front-line of the Afghan capital.

General Dostum, in a meeting in Islamabad on 10 February, informed Mehmood Mestiri that in the recent past, Ukraine had supplied thirty jet fighters aircraft to the forces of Ahmad Shah Masood and that India was busy supplying military hardware and other assistance to the forces of President Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Masood.

About 166 Afghans, who had infiltrated Taliban-held Herat and Farah Provinces to prepare the way for an assault from Iranian territory, were apprehended by the Taliban on 12 February.

After four days of talks between the Afghan opposition leaders in Islamabad on 13 February, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar said "an attack on any of the individual opposition groups (by Rabbani and Masood) would be considered an attack on all". He urged the Taliban to join hands with the other opposition parties to oust President Rabbani without "wasting time".

An Iranian border security guard was killed and two others wounded in cross-fire with the Taliban in Afghanistan's western Herat Province bordering Iran.

A high-level Afghan Government delegation led by Dr. Abdullah, on 28 February, arrived in the eastern city of Sarobi for what was believed to be the crucial round of talks with Hezb-i-Islami leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. This was the second delegation from Kabul who visited Sarobi in one week.

### **MARCH**

According to reports on 15 March, for the first time the Taliban reached an agreement of cooperation with a Shia group in Maidan Shahr west of Kabul. The agreement was concluded between the Taliban and Dr. Sadiq Modabbir.

President Rabbani, in an interview on 20 March, said he was optimistic that his negotiations with the Hezb-i-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar would result in an agreement.

The central Shura of Hezb-i-Islami (Hekmatyar) after a two-day meeting, endorsed the party high command's efforts for building up a consensus amongst all the forces for a negotiated settlement to the issue and also approved its talks with the Kabul administration of Professor Rabbani and the Taliban Islamic Movement.

### **APRIL**

A Taliban spokesman said, on 1 April, that the Taliban and Shia group of Hezb-i-Wahdat - a member of the four party anti-Rabbani alliance, SCC - agreed to forget their differences and join hands against President Rabbani. Wakil Ahmad told BBC that a commission would be formed to probe the killing of Abdul Ali Mazari, the former head of Hezb-i-Wahdat, who was shot dead allegedly by the Taliban after being arrested last year.

A Grand Assembly comprising about 1500 ulema (religious scholars) from all over Afghanistan, after week-long deliberations in Kandahar, on 3 April, unanimously declared President Rabbani as an illegal authority under Islamic laws and authorized the Taliban to wage "jihad" against him at the earliest opportunity. The gathering also considered the Afghan President dismissed from his office with effect from 3 April and stressed the need for a military solution to the crisis. The gathering of ulema and thousands of Taliban, at the end of the meeting, also gave their allegiance to the leader of the Taliban movement, Mawlawi Mohammad Omar, declaring him "Amir-ul-Momineen" of Afghanistan.

The elevation of Mawlawi Mohammad Omar as Amir-ul-Momineen drew an angry reaction from the former Afghan President Prof. Sibghatullah Mujaddadi. A declaration issued by the SCC said that the nomination was improper and beyond the standing of present-day Muslims.

The Taliban, on 15 April, launched a four-pronged counter attack to push pro-Rabbani forces from Ghor Province.

The Taliban, on 19 April, claimed to have recaptured Chaghcharan, capital of Ghor Province. Eight persons including the Governor of Ghor were killed while 100 others, mostly from Herat, were taken prisoners.

## SELECTED EVENTS OF 1996

### JANUARY

The US Consul General in Peshawar, said that the US appreciated and strongly supported President Rabbani's wide-ranging contacts with different Afghan groups to restore peace and find a solution to the Afghan dispute.

According to reports, the Taliban and SCC began negotiations, to work out a joint formula for a peaceful transfer of power in Kabul; agreed not to resume negotiations with the Afghan Government; and also agreed to continue the blockade of the highways and roads leading to Kabul as a measure to increase the pressure on the Government.

### FEBRUARY

ICRC began its emergency food airlift to Kabul by sending a cargo plane loaded with 15 MT of wheat flour and some medicine.

The UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, suggested the convening of an international conference to work out a way to establish peace and security in Afghanistan.

### MARCH

The EU urged the warring factions in Afghanistan to end fighting and allow humanitarian assistance to reach the war-affected people.

### APRIL

About 1500 ulema from all over Afghanistan, after week-long deliberations in Kandahar, unanimously declared President Rabbani as an illegal authority. The gathering, at the end of the meeting, declared Mawlawi Mohammad Omar as "Amir-ul-Momineen".

US Senator, Hank Brown, began a fact-finding tour, starting with a visit to Kabul for talks with top Government figures. He met Ahmad Shah Masood and Foreign Minister, Najibullah Lafrai. He held separate talks in Jalalabad with Haji Qadeer, the Governor of Nangarhar, Prof. Sayyaf and Eng. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

### MAY

The Salang tunnel was re-opened for humanitarian aid supplies, after being shut by factional fighting for two years. An ICRC convoy used the tunnel for the first time.

The UN Special envoy to Afghanistan, Mehmood Mestiri, in a letter to the UN Secretary General, asked to be relieved on health grounds.

US Assistant Secretary of State, Robin Raphel, said the US would continue to work through the UN special mission and other countries interested in Afghanistan to help the Afghan Peace Process.

### JUNE

20 Afghan leaders were invited to attend a 3 day Senate hearing on Afghanistan. Hezb-i-Islami, Eng. Hekmatyar, and Ittihad-i-Islami, Professor Sayyaf, were not invited.

According to Afghan sources, the Government of Turkmenistan accepted the Taliban as the new political and military force and allowed them to open a representative office on its soil, most probably in Ashkabad.

Former opposition leader and chief of Hezb-i-Islami, Eng. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, took oath as the Afghan Prime Minister in Kabul, on June 26.

## **JULY**

Dr. Norbert Holl, Director of South Asia for the German Foreign Ministry, was appointed UN special representative for Afghanistan.

UN Secretary General merged the OSGAP office with the Special Mission from 1 July, as UNSMA.

## **AUGUST**

Dr. Norbert Holl, UN Special envoy to Afghanistan, held a meeting with the ACBAR member agencies

A 6 member US diplomatic mission, headed by US Congressman Daniel Barker, held talks with Ahmad Shah Masood and Deputy Foreign Minister Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai, in Bagram Air-base, north of Kabul. The delegation also met with General Dostum in Mazar-i-Sharif.

## **SEPTEMBER**

Taliban, after capturing Kabul on 26 September, formed a 6 member council headed by Mawlawi Md. Rabbani to run Government affairs. A communique issued by the Taliban spiritual leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, called on the international community to extend diplomatic recognition to the new Government; announced suspension of services of all diplomatic staff in foreign missions; and asked host countries to take care of state property. The communique urged the UN and relief agencies to resume aid activities; and declared that in future all aspects of life in the country would be governed by strict Islamic laws. Issues like women's employment and girls education would be decided on the basis of Islamic teachings. "We are not against girls education but we want the women to be taught in accordance with the tenets of Islam." Following the takeover of Kabul, they hanged the former Afghan President, Dr. Najibullah, and his brother.

The Taliban ordered working women to stay home.

"All sisters who have outside work should stay home until further notice" Kabul Radio said. "We would pay the women employees so they are not exposed to financial difficulties. But we stand by our decision that women cannot work in Government offices in future".

## **OCTOBER**

Russian President Yeltsin called for a special CIS summit on Afghanistan. Meanwhile, national security chief, Alexander Lebed said that the Taliban rise to power in Kabul posed a threat to Central Asia and Russia, and that the Taliban wanted to annex parts of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Jumbish-i- Milli, Hezb-i-Wahdat (Khalili Group) and Ahmad Shah Masood signed a defence pact, in Mazar-i-Sharif and formed a defence commission to work out modalities of a unified command force.

International aid agencies in Kabul prepared a Position Statement on the issue of women's employment and girls education, on 5 October. They requested the authorities in Kabul to act with all possible urgency on these vital matters.

## **NOVEMBER**

The Taliban Education Minister said that education of Afghan girls had not been banned by the Taliban Movement, but only suspended until a segregated system can be organized.

Pakistan's President, Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari, dissolved the National Assembly on 5 November exercising his constitutional powers. Malik Meraj Khalid, a former speaker of the National Assembly, was named caretaker Prime Minister.

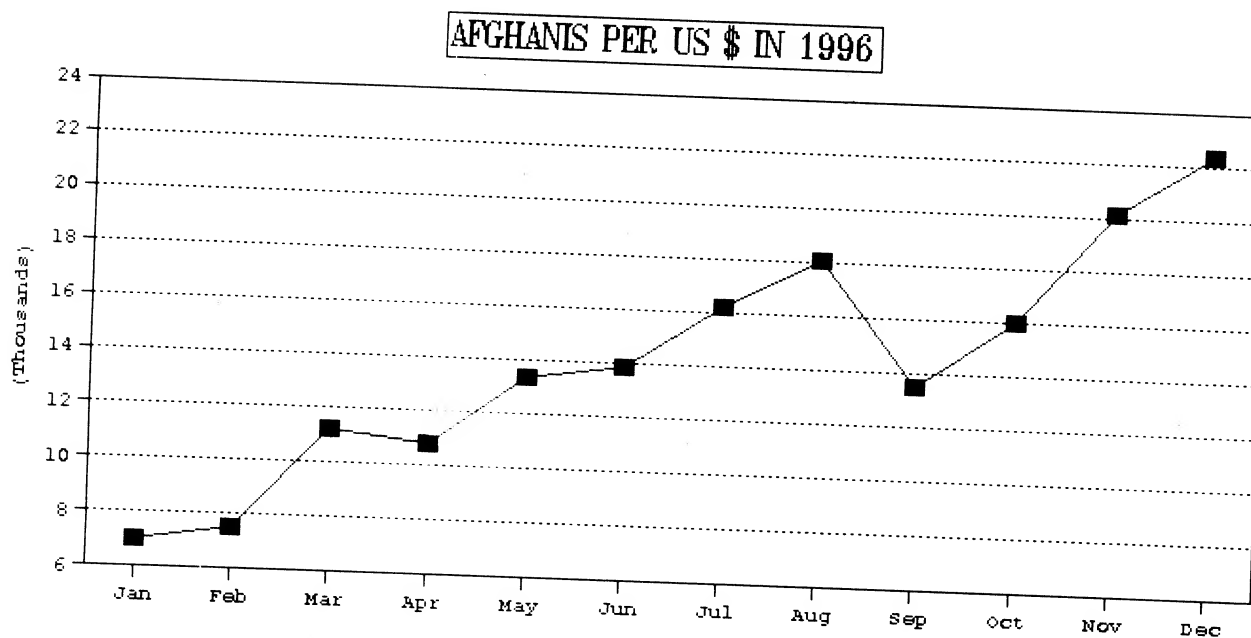
## **DECEMBER**

Taliban authorities in Afghanistan, in a new decree, instructed women not to work with foreign agencies or to visit their offices.

## AFGHANI EXCHANGE RATE IN 1996

The following provides some key average exchange rates on a monthly basis during 1996:

1996	Afs./Rupee	Afs./US \$	Rupee./US \$
January	205	7010	34.2
February	220	7540	34.2
March	326	11240	34.4
April	312	10750	34.4
May	385	13360	34.7
June	396	13840	34.9
July	460	16230	35.2
August	510	18100	35.4
September	365	13480	36.9
October	399	15990	40.0
November	502	20120	40.0
December	558	22360	40.0



NOTE: These rates were from the Peshawar foreign exchange market.

# ACBAR

## NEWS SUMMARY ON AFGHANISTAN

1996



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JANUARY 1997



## PREFACE

ACBAR is once again very pleased to make available the "News Summary on Afghanistan" for the year 1996.

From any point of view, 1996 was an extraordinary year for Afghanistan. Much changed and there were many developments both in the political and military situations in the country during the year - but peace and stability are yet to return to the country.

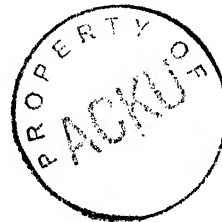
This ACBAR publication, has been produced by extracting the significant events reported in different Pakistani newspapers - The News, Frontier Post, Muslim and The Nation. No personal or organizational views have been included in this publication.

To make it easy for the readers, the important events have been listed under the following topics:

- Aid and economic developments;
- Military developments;
- Political development;
- Security matters; and
- Other news.

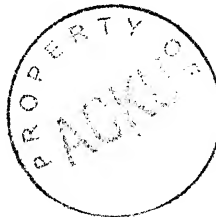
We hope this publication will prove useful and could be used as a reference document. We can only hope that 1997 will be a year of peace, stability and a little greater prosperity for all Afghans, who have suffered much, particularly, over the past few years. And we can also hope that the lot of women may be improved.

Charles A. MacFadden  
Executive Director ACBAR

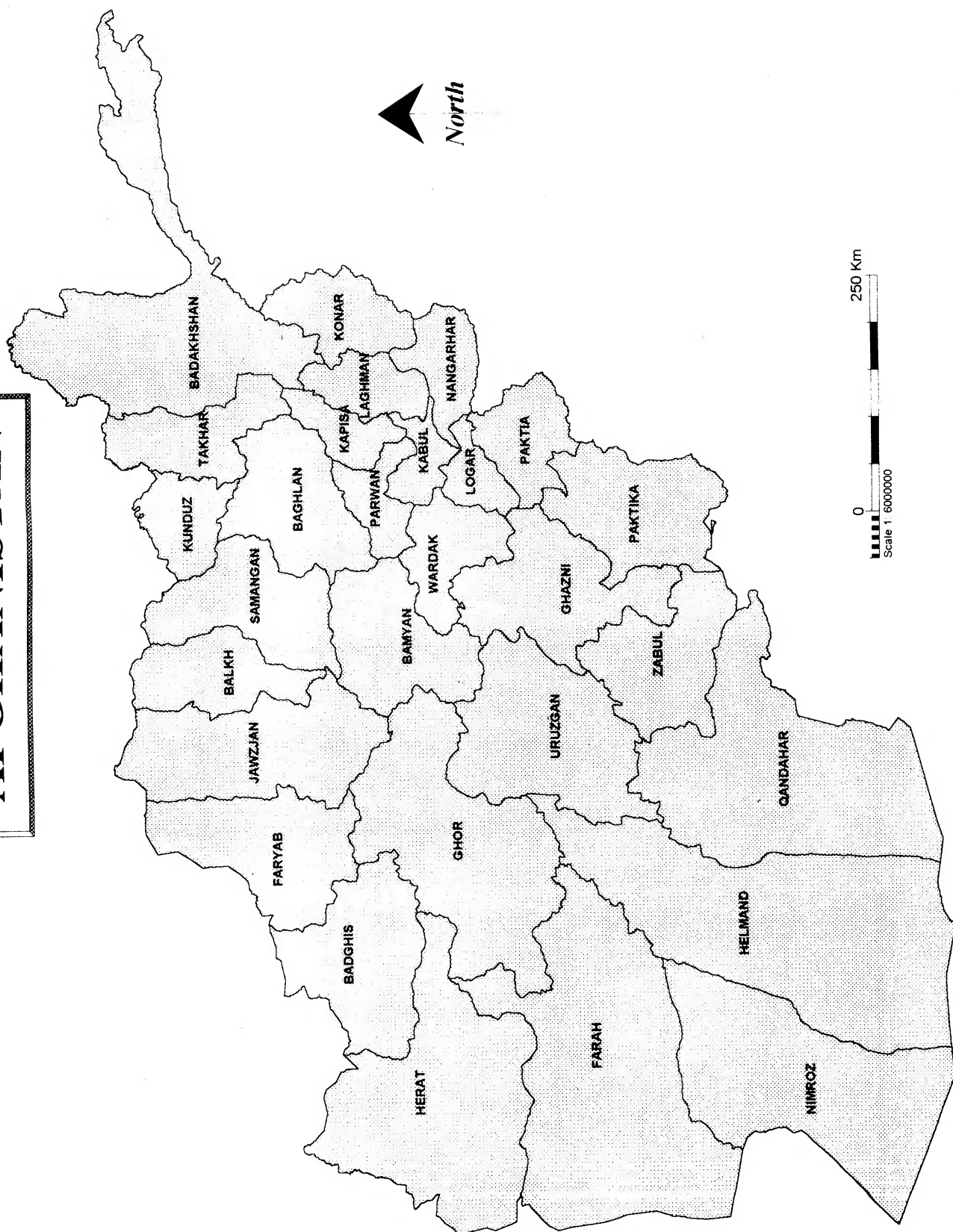


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# AFGHANISTAN



## ABBREVIATIONS

ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AI	Amnesty International
AIP	Associated Islamic Press
ANLF	Afghanistan National Liberation Front
CAR	Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
ICRC	International Committee for the Red Cross
IFRCs	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IRNA	Iranian News Agency
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NIFA	National Islamic Front of Afghanistan
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
ODA	Overseas Development Administration - United Kingdom
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
OSGA	Office of the Secretary General in Afghanistan
OSGAP	Office of the Secretary General in Afghanistan and Pakistan
SCC	Supreme Coordination Council
UN	United Nations
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
UNSMA	United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan.
US	United States
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
VOA	Voice of America